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ABSTRACT

This study investigates whether teachers do hold differential expectations for boys and girls in a diverse range of classroom functioning. Major research conducted to date and a study currently underway are reviewed. In sum, this paper hopes to raise a number of important questions for future investigation. Much previous research has investigated the hypothesis that boys receive more teacher disapproval than girls. There have been three general approaches to studying this topic: (1) direct observations of teacher behavior, (2) subjective reports by teachers concerning their treatment of boys and girls, and (3) subjective reports by children concerning their perception of teacher attitude toward boys and girls. The majority of studies using direct measures of teacher behavior confirms the hypothesis that boys receive more teacher disapproval than girls. Other studies have suggested that the interaction between various student characteristics, their sex, and teacher reaction is the important consideration. To investigate this, Sears (1963) asked a group of teachers to rate the children in their classes in terms of how much he/she enjoyed having each one in the group. A number of personality and ability measures on the children were available. The children were divided into two ability groups by sex for data analysis. The results indicated that the characteristics which best predicted whether a teacher would like a pupil differed for each of the four groups. Five general questions emerge. These include: (1) To what extent does stereotyping exist among teachers? and (2) To what extent do teacher characteristics determine the nature of the stereotypical behavior? (CK)

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# THE TEACHER'S PART IN SEX ROLE REINFORCEMENT

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Psychologists have long been interested in the early experiences which shape the sexual identify of the growing child. Not much attention has been given to studying those experiences, other than familial, which contribute to the developmental process by which children are socialized into sex roles. Parents or their surrogates have been cast as the principal agents who transmit sex roles to their children. Further, the development of sexual identity has been studied mainly within the context of personality development. Intellectual development is, derivatively, considered as an extension of this domain. The child who has achieved a strong appropriate sexual identification, for example, is considered better able to cope with the intellectual demands of his education than one who has not.

There have been critical rumblings, recently, which question the basic assumption of whether there should be "appropriate", well delineated roles for boys and girls.

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The burden of the critical argument is that this is an artifact of society, limiting and restricting full intellectual and emotional development of both men and women, and particularly women. Unfortunately, the data is sparse and inconsistent; and much of what data exists has been presented on both sides of the woman's liberation movement, as an emotional battle. Evaluating the validity of the criticisms in such a charged atmosphere, is like listening to chamber music in a thunder storm.

American schooling has now come in for its share of the lambasting, as they function in jelling the sex roles of children. Educational psychologists need to know if and how the schools play a part in establishing and maintaining the sex roles of their pupils. Further, we need to know whether this process really limits learning potential, stifles creativity, and restricts vocational choices. This paper will review major research to date and then will describe a study the authors are currently conducting. This study investigates whether teachers do hold differential expectations for boys and girls in a diverse range of classroom functioning. In sum, this paper hopes to raise a number of important questions for future investigation.

Numerous investigators have posited a complex interaction of biological, cultural and social factors which lead to the child's acquisition of sex-typed behavior. One such factor, differential expectation for males and females, is assumed to be of major importance in both the social learning theories and the cognitive-developmental theories of sex-role acquisition (Mischel, Kohlberg, 1966). Norms of behavior typical for boys differ considerably from those typical for girls, and these norms are traditionally regarded as fitting and appropriate. It is felt that societal (and educational) approval and acceptance of these norms reinforces the behavior which is regarded to be sexually determined. In this way, sex-role behavior which is considered appropriate continues to develop, in the school as well as elsewhere. Despite the importance attributed to expectation reinforcement, and despite the increasing interest in sex-role stereotyping, the teacher's role in shaping behavior via stereotypical expectations has only recently come under serious investigation.

The existence of sex-role stereotyping among adults, primarily with college-age students, has been the subject of much investigation (Broverman, et.al., 1970; Fernberger, 1948; McKee & Sheriffs, 1957; Rosenkrantz, et.al., 1968). In general, studies indicate that adults tend to ascribe greater social value to masculine behavior

than they do to feminine behavior (Broverman, et.al, 1970; Kitay, 1940; McKee & Sheriffs, 1959; Rosenkrantz, et.al., 1968; Sheriffs & McKee, 1953; 1957). Apparently, society applauds young Chrissie Everts' power and drive on the tennis court but picture society's acceptance of a teen age boy who wins the first prize in the State Fair Baking contest. Although not well documented by research data, our everyday observations indicate that "tom-boy" girls show lots of promise, but that "sissy" boys are a disaster. Not only do sex-role expectations differ for boys and girls, but they are differently vectored. Boy behavior has greater societal approval than girl behavior.... for <u>both</u> sexes.

Sex-role stereotyping functions in a variety of ways. Not only does stereotyping serve to regulate adult behavior, but it is undoubtedly a strong factor in shaping the behavior of children. There is research to show that parents have different behavioral expectations for boys and girls, hold different hopes and values for boys and girls, and therefore support different kinds of behaviors in boys and girls (Aberle & Naegele, 1952; Goodenough, 1957; Kagan & Lemkin, 1960; Kohn, 1959; Rothbart & Maccoby, 1966; Sears, et.al., 1965). The possibility that teachers hold strong sex-role expectations of their students and also support stereotypical behaviors, is the major concern of this paper.

Much previous research has investigated the hypothesis that boys receive more teacher disapproval than girls. There have been three general approaches to studying this topic: 1) direct observations of teacher behavior, 2) subjective reports by teachers concerning their treatment of boys and girls, and 3) subjective reports by children concerning their perception of teacher attitude toward boys and girls.

The majority of studies using direct measures of teacher behavior confirms the hypothesis that boys receive more teacher disapproval than girls (Jackson & Lahaderne, 1967; Meyer & Thompson, 1956; Spaulding, 1963). Upon examination, however, several of these studies delineate other interesting facts. Meyer and Thompson, e.g., found, in one of the three classrooms they studied, that boys, as compared to girls, received significantly more praise as well as more disapproval. Spaulding, moreover, found that teachers interacted significantly more often with boys than girls in three of four major categories of teacher behavior (approval, disapproval, and listening), and that this difference approached significance (p.06) in the fourth category as well (instruction). His results further indicated that boys were disapproved significantly more often for violation of rules, while girls were reprimanded for lack of skill or knowledge.

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In studying creativity, Torrance (1962) made use of teacher reports and discovered some interesting findings. He asked teachers to describe incidents in which they felt they had rewarded creative student behavior. 224 such incidents were reported: 172 of these mentioned the sex of the child. 74% of these reports indicated rewards as going to boys, while only 27% reported rewards going to girls.

Other studies have suggested that the interaction between various student characteristics, their sex, and teacher reaction is the important consideration. To investigate this, Sears (1963) asked a group of teachers to rate the children in their classes in terms of how much he/she enjoyed having each one in the group. A number of personality and ability measures on the children were available. The children were divided into two ability groups by sex for data analysis. The results indicated that the characteristics which best predicted whether a teacher would like a pupil differed for each of the four groups. There was no consistent set of pupil personality characteristics for a given sex, which could predict whether or not a teacher enjoyed having a child in her class. Rather, this differed for each of the ability groups, as well as for the sex groups. She looked for

different qualities for example, in bright boys than in bright girls; she appreciated different qualities in average boys as compared to bright boys; and in average girls as compared to bright girls. Lippitt & Gold (1959), in a study of direct observation of teacher behavior, found that when children were divided into groups of high and low social power teachers responded differently to boys and girls. Social power was defined as the ability to induce other children to follow. Teachers were found to be far more supportive and less critical of low power girls than low power boys and only slightly more critical and less supportive of high power girls than boys. In general, teachers tend to disapprove of boys who are not leaders, but can accept passivity in girls more readily.

When students report their perception of how teachers feel about boys and girls, they generally report that boys receive more teacher disapproval than girls. Some have argued that this kind of teacher behavior could have a "feminizing" effect upon the male student. Yet, Sears (1963) has not found this to be so. She found bright 5th and 6th grade girls to be significantly lower than boys of the same intelligence in their self-concepts of mental ability. Torrance (1962) reported two studies in which boys and girls

were asked to experiment with science toys and to suggest how these toys might be used. The first study showed boys to have more good ideas than girls, while the second showed no such sex difference. In both studies, however, when students were asked who contributed the better ideas, both boys and girls felt that the boys' contributions were superior. Sears (1963) speculates that it is possible that the cumulative effect of differential teacher responses to boys and girls results in different social learning for each sex. She hypothesizes an increase in autonomous behavior in boys as they are disapproved, praised, listened to, and taught more by the teacher, and a lowering of self-esteem and creativity for girls as they receive less attention and are criticized more for their lack of knowledge and skill.

Another factor which serves to influence stereotypical behavior relates to socio-economic variables. It has been shown, for example, that the extent to which parents subscribe to traditional sex-role expectations, and the extent to which their children demonstrate sex-typical behaviors are negatively correlated with socio-economic status (Bronfenbrenner, 1958, 1961a, 1961b; Kohn, 1959; Parsons, 1952; Rabban, 1950). In other words, the higher up on the socio-economic ladder (the more income, the more education), the greater the flexibility in accepting a diverse range of behaviors in boys and girls.

Whether teachers teaching children of varying socio-economic background will differ in the extent, flexibility, and enforcement of sex-role expectation, is unknown.

The literature certainly seems to suggest that boys in the classroom are the recipients of more attention from their teachers. Despite the findings that teachers disapprove more of boys than of girls, it is plausible that this disapproval may, in fact, reflect that teachers are attending to boys and expect more from boys. In other words, teachers may tend to accept, or, at least, tolerate deficiency in their female pupils as long as their deviations are not extreme, but tend to be disappointed in boys who do not live up to their higher expectations. Such a hypothesis may account for the finding that male pupils are more often referred to remedial teachers, school psychologists, and child guidance clinics than are female pupils. Are boys really less stable, or does the school hold different standards for boys and girls? We are currently investigating this hypothesis.

It is apparent that it is not sufficient to simply study teacher approval or disapproval of boys and girls in order to understand the complex problem of differential teacher expectation for boys and girls. Rather, a wide variety of intellectual, social, and personal variables needs to be systematically investigated in order to answer a number of, as yet unanswered questions.

Five general questions emerge.

1) To what extent does stereotyping exist among teachers in general?

2) To what extent do teacher-characteristics determine the nature and extent of the stereotypical behavior? How does the teacher's sex, age, training, socio-economic background, personality, et.al. determine whether and how stereotypical behavior will emerge in the classroom?

3) To what extent do student characteristics determine the nature and extent of stereotypical behaviors in their teachers? Does the pupil's age, intelligence, ethnic and socio-economic affiliation influence differential expectation for boys and girls on the part of the teacher?

4) What behaviors are sex-role stereotyped? The literature addresses itself to differential reward and disapproval of pupil behavior. It is weak in specifying precisely what kinds of behavior teachers reward for all children, and what kind, if any, are differentially rewarded because of the sex of the student.

5) What are the effects of sex-role stereotyping? How is stereotyping related to education and subsequent vocational achievement? Does sex-role stereotyping

limit learning potential, stifle creativity, shape ultimate vocational goal choices, and restrict the possibilities for full intellectual and emotional development of both boys and girls?

The authors are presently engaged in a study which may begin to answer some of these questions. The first phase of the study is designed to elicit which behaviors, interests, attitudes, personality characteristics and intellectual attributes teachers judge as appropriate for boys, for girls, for neither, or for both. The second phase will evaluate how stereotypical, expectations affect the teacher's behavior toward her individual pupils. In other words, given two children with the same characteristics, except for sex, how and what does the teacher teach to each; how does she evaluate their individual adjustments, how does she respond to their behavior; what does she encourage; what does she inhibit; and what are her overall expectations for the pupil's academic achievement? The study will further evaluate how teacher response may vary as a function of the pupil's intelligence and ethnic background.

Once the variables underlying differential expectation for boys and girls are better understood, perhaps the relation of stereotypical behavior to learning may come under systematic

investigation. How sex-role stereotyping affects learning potentials and educational achievements is an important question for psychologists and educators. It is difficult to imagine that we can meet the educational needs of all children . . . . a goal repeatedly stated . . . . if these needs are, in part, determined in advance by the sex of the pupil, and by artifactual expectations of his teacher.

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